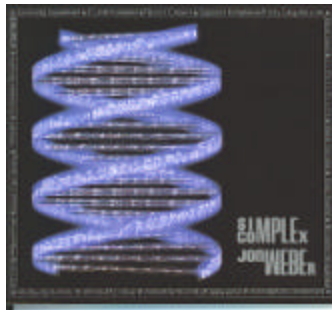




## THE YEAR'S BEST JAZZ RECORDINGS:

By Howard Reich, Tribune Arts Critic



### 1.) **JON WEBER - "SIMPLE COMPLEX"** (2ndCenturyJazz Records)

Anyone who keeps up with the art of jazz piano knows that Weber ranks among the most fluid improvisers in the business, bringing a contemporary harmonic edge to a mainstream tradition exemplified by Dick Hyman. But even Weber's more ardent fans never could have guessed that the man can write and arrange at such an exalted level. The originality of his compositions, the ingenuity of his arrangements and the high sheen of the ensemble performances he leads on "[Simple Complex](#)" force the listener to reassess Weber's gifts.

With this release, Weber takes his place among the more accomplished jazz musicians writing today. Just listen to the bold chord changes and unstoppable energy of "[Hot Ice](#)," the extraordinary lyric tenderness of the ballad "[No More Words](#)," the sly/wry tone of "[Mister Kleckley](#)." Every cut on this disc, in fact, offers a distinct world of expression, as articulated by Weber and such luminaries as vibist Gary Burton, saxophonist Eric Alexander, flugelhornist Roy Hargrove and guitarist John Moulder, among others.

- 2.) The Big 3 Palladium Orchestra, "Live at the Blue Note" (Big 3 Entertainment)
- 3.) Wynton Marsalis, "Unforgivable Blackness" (Blue Note Records)
- 4.) Jean-Michel Pilc, "Follow Me" (Dreyfus Jazz)
- 5.) Matthew Shipp, "Harmony & Abyss" (Thirsty Ear)
- 6.) Clark Terry With the Chicago Jazz Orchestra, "Porgy & Bess" (A440 Music Group)
- 7.) Von Freeman, "The Great Divide" (Premonition Records)
- 8.) Maurice Brown, "Hip to Bop"
- 9.) Rudresh Mahanthappa, "Mother Tongue"
- 10.) HONORABLE MENTIONS: Maria Schneider Orchestra, "Concert in the Garden" ArtistShare; Patricia Barber; Live: "A Fortnight in France" (Blue Note) Dave Douglas, "Strange Liberation" (Bluebird/RCA); Nestor Torres, "Sin Palabras" (Heads Up)